

at Singapore by any means. What was contemplated beyond will some day be well known to every one; at present I would rather leave it to be imagined.

"Broadly the earlier stages of the programme were these: the taking of Suez and the conquest of Egypt; conquest of Persia; economic, not military, subjugation of Russia, and finally, with access to the Persian Gulf obtained, the conquest through Persia of Afghanistan, of India.

"Another possible route for attack upon India followed the Caspian and proceeded eastward through central Asia. So long as Afghanistan remained a staunch and friendly buffer this path could not cross its frontiers, but must be further north, through Turkestan."

Effectually Blocked and Quickly.

"Wouldn't that have been very rough going, for several reasons?" Col. Milne was asked.

"It might. However, it was effectually blocked in ample season. I can't give you details." He smiled. "You will be safe if you simply state that it was blocked.

"Of course as the war stands to-day no one expects that Germany will again be able to undertake such expeditions.

"Now as to Mesopotamia. Please look at the map for a moment. Any overland campaign from the north in the direction of the Persian Gulf is restricted by the desert to following the Euphrates or the Tigris River system, or else coming down by an easterly course under the Persian hills. Our forces in Mesopotamia, extended northward from Basra like three widespread fingers, now close these three routes and hold the territory between them. The Mesopotamian pathway to the East no longer exists for the enemy.

"I find," Col. Milne observed, "that most Americans have the sketchiest notions of Mesopotamia, especially of the distances involved in our operations. It is natural that they should have, being so far away. In the first place, Bombay, our starting point and base, is nearly 2,000 miles from Basra by a straight line, and considerably further by the steamship route through the strait and the Persian Gulf.

First Front 700 Miles From Fighting.

"At Basra to-day you are technically at the front, but you're 700 miles from the firing line. Incidentally, our force up the Euphrates, which is our nearest one to Palestine, is 600 miles as an army must move from Gen. Allenby's force, although the distance across the desert is far shorter. This is sometimes forgotten when people with a map before them are figuring the likelihood of the former force joining the latter.

"I don't think there can be the least doubt in any one's mind after Thyssen's pamphlet that the actual German designs were those I have summarized. That they are and have been known to Washington seems plain from President Wilson's Buffalo speech of November 13, 1917.

"What I am attempting is to make the facts equally plain to the American people, so that when peace comes to be discussed no popular misapprehension in the United States can lead to a sentiment in favor of any disposition of Mesopotamia that might leave the region open to future German-Turkish influence.

"The point now," said Col. Milne, "is not in the question of just what shall be done with Mesopotamia for the future; the point is to insure it that the Turks and through them the Germans shall not have it or have any opening for intrigue there. That stone has been pulled out of the German arch. It must never be available to another German arch plotter."

Thyssen's Pamphlet Revealed Plan.

The pamphlet referred to is one written and published by August Thyssen, Sr., the Rhenish Westphalian coal, iron and steel baron. Knowledge of the pamphlet leaked out of Germany last January and the text of it has been procured, although the German Government tried to suppress it and fined the author. Thyssen complained that the Government had blackmailed him for a billion for a war loan, threatening loss of his big War Office contracts. He went on to tell of promises personally made to him by the Kaiser long before the war.

"The Hohenzollerns put their ideas before us as a business proposition," the excellent Thyssen writes bitterly. "In 1912 the Hohenzollerns saw that the war had become a necessity to the preservation of the military system upon which their power depends. . . . I was personally promised a free grant of 30,000 acres in Australia and a loan from the Deutsche Bank of \$750,000 at 3 per cent. to enable me to develop my business in Australia.

"To several other firms were promised specific trading facilities in India, which



British modernizing historic Bagdad.

was to be conquered by Germany, be it noted, by the end of 1915.

"The Emperor was particularly enthusiastic over the coming German conquest of India.

"India," he said, "is occupied by the British. It is in a way governed by Great Britain, but it is by no means completely governed by them. We shall not merely govern India, we shall conquer it, and the vast resources that the British allow to be taken by Indian princes will after our conquest flow in a golden stream into the fatherland. In all the richest land of the earth the German flag will fly over every other flag."

What Our President Said.

Col. Milne's allusion to the President's address to the American Federation of Labor was probably made with the following passage in mind:

"I suppose very few of you have thought much about the Berlin to Bagdad railway. The Berlin to Bagdad railway was constructed in order to run the threat of force down the flank of the industrial undertakings of half a dozen other countries, so that when German competition came it would not be resisted too far, because there was always the possibility of getting German armies into the heart of that country quicker than any other country's armies could be got there."

To return to Col. Milne:

"Mesopotamia," he said, "has belonged to Turkey four centuries. When the Turks conquered it the land was populous and fertile, thanks to a good irrigation system from the natural water courses. Under characteristic Turkish administration the whole region reverted to the desert, except strips of palms and coarse grass along the river edges.

"To the native Arab the Turk has always been a detested tax collecting leech. The bond of a common religion has not held them together. The Arab hates the Turk beyond expression, and so, when the holy war was proclaimed in Constantinople, as Mr. Morgenthau has described, the Arab wasn't having any—any part in it," the Colonel added, to elucidate the idiom for Americans. "The Arab welcomed the British forces, and he asks nothing better than to have the Turk kept off his neck for all time to come. What was ever the use of his irrigating and trying to produce anything when he was sure to be mulcted of it by the Turkish oppressor?"

First Care Was of a Pipe Line.

"Our first small expedition was sent from Bombay in the fall of 1914 simply to protect the pipe line from the Anglo-Persian oil fields. As soon as Turkey entered the war we knew the Turks would try to reach the pipe line and shut off that very important oil supply. They would have to cross Persian territory, which was neutral, but we knew such technicalities would not hinder them.

"As a member of the Advisory Shipping Board, which apportions the Indian tonnage for war purposes, thus roughly

corresponding to your Shipping Board, though it did not have ship construction to undertake, I had in charge the sea transport for the expeditions. That original one was utterly insufficient for any such campaign as circumstances forced upon it. After reaching the coast it was obliged, in order to head off the Turks, to push further and further from Basra up the Tigris until in 1915 Kut-el-Amara was reached and captured.

Bagdad Worth the Effort.

"The Turkish force defeated on this occasion was the last at the moment between Basra and Bagdad. The Dardanelles expedition had come to grief. Our prestige in the Near East had suffered. Inadequate as the force in Mesopotamia was, it was decided that Bagdad was worth trying for.

"The decision has since been much criticised, but it is easy to be wise after the fact. If the venture had succeeded even temporarily—as our recent capture of Baku did—every one would probably have lauded the commander responsible as the greatest strategist on earth."

"Gen. Townshend?"

"No," said Col. Milne with quiet finality. "Townshend was only the defender of Kut after the expedition, which had got within sight of Bagdad, had been driven back by timely Turkish reinforcements and besieged. His defence of the place has made his name famous, and so it is widely associated with the entire venture. But that is a mistake.

"If you have in mind the distance from Bombay and the extreme difficulties of transport up the shallow Tigris with the means which were then available you will see why such attempts as could be made to relieve Kut were failures.

Campaign a Complete Success.

"But by 1916 we were prepared to begin a real Mesopotamian campaign, which has turned out so complete a success. By then the obsolete port of Basra had been modernized, wharves had been built and railways begun. The rivers had been dredged and confined to their channels by bunds—a bund, so far as could be gathered, being a sort of Mississippi levee built up of mud. "We had ready an ample number of shallow draft river steamers. Some of these had been collected on the rivers of India and elsewhere, others specially built, in America some of them. Gen. Maude's advance was sound and sure.

"The troops used in Mesopotamia were drawn from the British garrison force in India, and perhaps Americans do not realize that at one stage of the war the requirements of our various fronts had reduced that garrison force to 15,000 men. Fifteen thousand to maintain order in a population of 320,000,000! The fact that order was maintained discounts all the wild tales that were circulated some time ago of native disaffection, general rebellion imminent and the like. No such rebellion ever was imminent. It was not

the fault of the Germans, but German machinations accomplished nothing.

"In the early days of the war the Indian munitions stores furnished the British armies with 70,000,000 rounds of small arms ammunition, 60,000 rifles and 550 guns. To-day that would be less than a drop in the bucket. At the time it was exceedingly important, momentarily important perhaps, for no such arsenal existed in England or France.

"As for Mesopotamia, when the first expedition was landed there were sixteen steamers on the Tigris. By the fall of 1917 there were 1,700. The railroads have followed the armies. The ancient city of Bagdad is being modernized—telephones and so on."

"Tramways?" somebody suggested.

"Not yet," said the Colonel laughing. "Meanwhile 11,000 square miles of land we found utterly barren, because of the uncontrolled river overflow at the season of the rains, has been reclaimed by engineering works and put under cultivation.

"The crops being made are saving the combined shipping resources against Germany 2,000,000 tons a year, which would otherwise have to be used to provision our armies in Mesopotamia. Cotton, wheat, sugar, anything can be grown there which grows in India. Once reclaimed the soil is enormously productive, really the garden spot alleged in the old traditions.

Great Areas Reclaimed.

"The reclaimed and cultivated areas are distributed the length of the region occupied. I have in mind one tract, 300 miles in length, that was reclaimed by building a bund from Basra to Shaiiba for the control of the Euphrates. That bund is eleven miles long, forty feet wide at the base and seven feet high.

"The climate is severe. Querneh, within the junction of the Euphrates and the Tigris, is the place in Mesopotamia considered to have the best claim to have been the site of the Garden of Eden. At Querneh the temperature can rise to 130 degrees, and that is damp heat. Tommy—Mr. Thomas Atkins—"is of opinion that the flaming sword was there beyond a doubt, but the use of the sword has got mixed in the orthodox version. He thinks it was used to keep the sinners in.

"Between seasons, in October and November, there is a sixty degree temperature change.

"The reclamation and improvement that have begun in war time can be extended almost without limit. Given his chance the native Arab is by no means the worthless idler you might suppose him. He shows himself industrious and enterprising. But it will be years before any Government's investment in these projects can begin to yield returns. In the meantime the country intrinsically is the reverse of a profitable possession.

"Interesting things I have seen there myself? I've seen a thousand Russians in one of our prison camps—you find that interesting, do you? How did it come about? Well, they were trans-Caucasian Russians from the country near the Turkish frontier, where it's hard to know who is a Russian and who a Turk. But those were Russians, right enough."

Col. Milne's Own History.

One thing he had seen Col. Milne thought unworthy of mention; however, tales were told behind his back. He saw Death, and he all but went out with him, suffering sunstroke four times under the aforementioned heat. The result was invalid leave to go home, which is Scotland in the Colonel's case. He came by the Pacific, and once in the United States, under request of the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, he improved the opportunity to lecture a little and set us right about India in war time. On his reaching New York the British Ministry of Information secured him to do a like service for Mesopotamia.

He is the son of a noted family of shipbuilders; went to India at about the time of attaining to his majority, made a career as a shipowner and by 1914 was the largest one in Bombay. He is a member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council and a leader of the Indo-European, which is the moderate party, the substantial progressives in Indian politics. A tall figure that carries the uniform well; strong and active looking, deceptively so for the time being. He appears 35 and is probably ten years older. He will continue his lecturing a while, but says he is eager to finish and get home, "not that it is not very pleasant here," he qualifies.

He is convinced that it was Serbia's position as the stumbling block in the chosen German path which—which at least made Germany particularly ready to seize upon a pretext for war involving Serbia at the very beginning.